Kailasanathar Temple, Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu, India

Info is given under following headings:

Location, how to get there, speciality of this temple, history and legends, architecture, main deity and subdeities, daily rituals and poojas and their charges, special poojas and their charges, festivals celebrated, facilities available for devotees such as accommodation, do's and don'ts, nearby temples, nearby hotels, nearby tourist spots, any other info...etc

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Location

The temple is situated on the western outskirts of the city of Kanchipuram in Tamil Nadu, India. It lies approximately 1 kilometer west of the bustling city center and around 75 kilometers from the state capital, Chennai. Religiously and geographically, it marks the region known as Shiva Kanchi.

© Photographed By Bikash R Das

How to Get There

- **By Air:** The nearest domestic and international gateway is Chennai International Airport (MAA), roughly 75 km away. Taxis, app-based cabs, and regional transit buses connect the airport to Kanchipuram.
- **By Train:** Kanchipuram Railway Station connects locally to Chennai's suburban rail network and surrounding towns. For broader interstate networks, Arakkonam Junction (approx. 30 km away) or Chennai Central serve as key rail links.
- **By Road:** Kanchipuram is exceptionally well-linked via major highways. Standard public buses run frequently from Chennai's Koyambedu (CMBT) bus terminal, as well as from Vellore and Bangalore.
- **Last-Mile Transport:** From the main Kanchipuram bus stand or railway station, the temple is easily reachable via auto-rickshaws, local cycle-rickshaws, or regional taxis.

Speciality of This Temple

Unlike many monumental temples of Tamil Nadu that grew incrementally across dynasties over many centuries, this temple stands out as a pristine time capsule of structural Pallava architecture. It is widely revered by historians as the first major stone-built structural temple in South India, deviating from earlier rock-cut cave or monolith models seen in places like Mahabalipuram.

History and Legends

- **Royal Foundations:** The construction of the temple was initiated around 700 CE by the Pallava King Narasimhavarman II (also known popularly as Rajasimha). The front façade, entry-level gopuram, and additional peripheral layout elements were completed shortly thereafter by his son, Mahendravarman III.
- **The Epigraphical Records:** The complex serves as a literal stone library, housing highly calligraphic inscriptions in early Grantha and Nagari scripts detailing royal titles, structural descriptions, and early philosophical hymns.
- **The Cosmic Awakening Legend:** According to traditional regional beliefs, the temple was built in absolute alignment with the Smartha tradition of classical Hindu worship. A primary local legend associated with the circumambulatory path suggests that crawling through its tight stone passage symbolizes the entire cycle of a soul's birth, physical life, death, and ultimate spiritual liberation (Moksha).

Architecture

- **Material Integrity:** The foundations of the entire complex are laid with heavy granite blocks to bear the incredible weight, while the entire visible superstructure and its intricately detailed panel reliefs are carved completely from soft, cohesive sandstone.
- **The Vimana:** The primary tower (*Vimana*) rising directly over the innermost sanctum features a distinct four-story pyramidal structure. It scales upward proportionately to culminate in a unique dome-shaped roof structure.
- **The Mythical Yalis:** The base pillars and intermediate architectural columns throughout the open courtyards are famous for featuring prominent, rearing

Yalis—mythical lion figures that serve as a hallmark identifier of classical Pallava aesthetic expression.
- **The Exterior Shrines:** The outer compound walls are intricately lined with 58 separate miniature sub-shrines containing distinct, deeply expressive sandstone relief murals of cosmic events.

Main Deity and Subdeities

- **Main Deity:** The central sanctum sanctorum houses a majestic, massive sixteen-sided Shiva Lingam carved from polished, dark black granite.
- **Subdeities:** The auxiliary niches and adjacent walls house an expansive gallery of early Hindu iconography. Key carvings include Lord Shiva depicted as Somaskanda (alongside Parvati and Skanda), Shiva as Dakshinamurthy, Gangadhara capturing the river Ganges in a single strand of hair, Lord Shiva playing a unique, early stringed instrument (Veena), Ganesha, Kartikeya, and highly vivid depictions of Goddess Durga.

Daily Rituals, Poojas, and Charges

Because the property is an actively protected historical monument managed entirely by the **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)**, the administrative framework differs significantly from standard, modern pilgrimage sites:

- **Operating Hours:** The gates are typically open daily from 6:00 AM to 12:30 PM, and reopen for evening visitors from 4:00 PM to 6:30 PM (sometimes stretching to 7:30 PM based on seasonal light).
- **Daily Poojas:** Simple daily rituals and institutional worship are performed by traditional priests at standard intervals (morning opening, noon closing, and evening sunset).
- **Pooja Charges:** There are no formal ticketing options, structured queues, or tier-based paid ticket charges for standard daily viewing or poojas.
- **Entry Fee:** Admission into the historic monument grounds is entirely **Free** for all domestic and international visitors.

Special Poojas and Charges

- **Pradosham & Full Moon Days:** Special periodic poojas are carried out internally during the monthly Pradosham cycles and auspicious full moon days.
- **Custom Bookings:** Large-scale commercialized "paid ticket" poojas or individualized sponsorship packages are not standard here due to its protected historical status. Simple personal archival offerings can be coordinated respectfully at the main sanctum with the local officiating priest, usually on a voluntary dakshina or donation basis rather than a mandatory fixed tariff sheet.

Festivals Celebrated

- **Maha Shivaratri:** This is the most profound event on the temple calendar (typically occurring in February–March). The complex stays open long past standard hours,

drawing massive crowds of devotees and cultural enthusiasts who participate in night-long meditation and continuous prayer.
- **Thirukarthigai:** Celebrated with great visual splendor during November–December, the open sandstone courtyards and stone niches of the 58 sub-shrines are illuminated gracefully with thousands of traditional earthen oil lamps.

Facilities Available for Devotees

- **Basic Comforts:** The ASI maintains basic, functional clean drinking water points and public restroom utilities near the outer entry perimeter.
- **Accessibility:** The main perimeter paths are mostly flat and stone-laid, offering moderate walking ease. However, the inner sanctum approaches and ancient sub-shrines feature narrow steps and raised structural thresholds, offering only partial wheelchair friendliness.
- **Accommodation:** There are no official temple-managed dharamshalas or accommodation blocks directly built inside this historic monument zone. Devotees rely completely on private hotels and regional guest houses located closer to the Kanchipuram city center and the main bus terminus.

Do's and Don'ts

- **Do:** Dress in modest, culturally respectful attire. Remove all footwear at the designated entry points before stepping onto the sacred inner stone platforms.
- **Do:** Take time to observe the delicate sandstone artwork in soft morning light, which offers excellent conditions for architecture enthusiasts and personal travel photography.
- **Don't:** Photography of any kind is strictly prohibited inside the inner sanctum sanctorum. You are permitted to photograph only the exterior structures, open courtyards, and compound murals.
- **Don't:** Touch, lean against, or apply any external substances (like water, oil, or lighting materials) to the highly fragile, ancient sandstone murals and inscriptions lining the compound walls.
- **Don't:** Attempt to squeeze into the tight, narrow circumambulatory passage if you experience claustrophobia, low mobility, or breathing difficulties, as it is highly constricted

Nearby Temples

Ekambaranathar Temple
4.7 ★
Hindu temple
Closed Opens at 4.00 pm

- Ekambaranathar Temple – A colossal Shiva temple located nearby, housing an ancient, revered mango tree representing the element of Earth (Prithvi Lingam).

Sri Kanchi Kamakshi Amman Temple
4.7 ★
Hindu temple
Closed Opens at 4.00 pm

- Sri Kanchi Kamakshi Amman Temple – The primary historic Shakta center of Kanchipuram, featuring a stunning golden vimana.
- **Vaikunta Perumal Temple** – Another brilliant structural Pallava masterpiece dedicated to Vishnu, famous for its unique multi-tiered sanctum configuration.

Nearby Hotels

Excellent accommodation choices located within 2 to 4 kilometers of the monument zone include:

- **Regency Kanchipuram by GRT Hotels** – A reliable option offering highly comfortable rooms, modern amenities, and a dedicated full-service restaurant.
- **Hotel SSK Grand** – Strategically located close to the central commercial core, highly rated for its clean layout and traditional South Indian vegetarian breakfast.
- **TTDC Hotel Tamilnadu** – A functional, budget-friendly state-run property offering reliable double rooms and practical travel amenities for regional tourists.

Nearby Tourist Spots

- **Kanchipuram Silk Weaving Centers:** The local handloom weaving units around Pillayarpalayam and the central town offer an authentic glimpse into the master production of world-renowned Kanchipuram silk sarees.
- **Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary:** Located roughly 48 km away, this historic mangrove environment makes for an excellent seasonal side excursion for nature lovers and birdwatchers.

Any Other Info

Because the building is predominantly sandstone, it has naturally weathered over the past 1,300 years. The ASI continuously implements delicate chemical preservation steps to slow down the natural erosion of the friable sandstone reliefs. Visiting during the cooler winter months (October through March) ensures the stone surfaces are pleasant to explore comfortably on foot.

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Ref: GrokAI

Kailasanathar Temple (also known as Kanchi Kailasanathar Temple or Kailasanatha Temple) is one of the oldest and most significant Shiva temples in Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu.

Location

The temple is in Kanchipuram (also called Kanchi), Tamil Nadu, in the Shiva Kanchi area, towards the western part of the city. It lies on the banks of the Vegavathi (or Vedavathi) River. Coordinates are approximately 12.8423°N, 79.6897°E. It is about 75 km southwest of Chennai.

How to Get There

- **By Air**: Nearest airport is Chennai (Meenambakkam), about 75-80 km away. Taxis, cabs, or buses are available from there.
- **By Train**: Kanchipuram Railway Station is the nearest (about 2.7-3 km from the temple). Trains connect from Chennai, Bangalore, and other major cities.
- **By Bus**: Kanchipuram Bus Stand is about 3 km away. Frequent buses from Chennai, Bangalore, Vellore, Tirupati, etc. Auto-rickshaws, taxis, or local transport are easily available within Kanchipuram.

Speciality of This Temple

It is the oldest surviving structure in Kanchipuram and one of the earliest structural (not rock-cut) temples in South India, built entirely in stone. It is renowned for its exquisite Pallava-era Dravidian architecture, intricate sandstone carvings depicting various forms of Shiva and other deities, early Hindu mural paintings (similar to Ajanta style), and a unique 16-sided black granite Shiva Lingam. The temple has a symbolic circumambulatory passage representing the cycle of life, death, and rebirth. It is maintained by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).

History and Legends

Built around 685-705 CE by Pallava king Narasimhavarman II (Rajasimha), with later additions by his son Mahendravarman III. It exemplifies the transition from rock-cut to structural temples in South India and influenced later Chola architecture (e.g., inspiration for

Brihadeeswara Temple). Legends associate it with Smartha tradition worship and the Pallavas' devotion to Shiva. A secret tunnel is believed to have served as an escape route during wars.

Architecture

This is a classic example of early Dravidian style using sandstone (superstructure) on granite foundations.

Key features:
- Square-plan layout with mukha-mandapa (entrance hall), maha-mandapa, ardhamandapa, and garbhagriha (sanctum) topped by a four-storey pyramidal vimana.
- 58 small sub-shrines in niches along the inner compound wall, mostly depicting Shiva forms (Somaskanda reliefs).
- Profuse carvings of deities, mythical lions (Yali), dancers, and scenes from Shaivism, Vaishnavism, and Shaktism.
- Inner murals and inscriptions in early scripts.

Main Deity and Subdeities

- ****Main Deity****: Lord Shiva as Kailasanathar (or Rajasimheswara), with a rare 16-sided black granite Lingam in the sanctum.

- ****Subdeities****: Numerous forms of Shiva in the 58 shrines (e.g., Tripurantaka, Sandhya Tandavamurti, Bhikshatana, Lingodbhava). Other carvings include Parvati, Durga, Brahma, Vishnu, Ganesha, Kartikeya, and Nandi.

Daily Rituals and Poojas and Their Charges

The temple is generally open **6:00 AM - 12:00/12:30 PM and 4:00 PM - 7:00/7:30 PM** (timings may vary slightly).

Entry is **free**.

Aartis are performed morning and evening..

Regular Shiva poojas and abhishekams occur daily.

Specific charges for special sevas (like Abhishekam) are typically modest (e.g., around ₹1000 for certain rituals at similar temples), but confirm on-site or via temple authorities as they can change.

Photography is often restricted inside.

Special Poojas and Their Charges
Special poojas are more elaborate during festivals. Details on exact charges are best obtained directly from the temple, as they are not extensively listed online and may be nominal. Common ones include extended abhishekams and homams.

Festivals Celebrated

- **Maha Shivaratri** (Feb/March): Biggest festival with thousands of devotees, night-long prayers.
- Others: Panguni Uthiram, Navaratri, Thai Poosam, Shravanam, Kartikai Deepam, and general Hindu festivals like Ram Navami, etc.

Facilities Available for Devotees (e.g., Accommodation)

- Limited facilities within the temple complex itself (quiet temple, free parking on street, though limited).

- **Accommodation**: Kanchipuram has many hotels, guesthouses, and dharamshalas (some near major temples like Kamakshi or Ekambareswarar). Options range from budget to mid-range. No specific temple-run accommodation highlighted for this temple.

- **Other**: Basic shops for prasadam/offerings nearby.

Do's and Don'ts

- **Do's**: Dress modestly (dhoti/pajama with shirt for men; saree/churidar for women). Remove shoes. Maintain silence and respect. Follow queue for darshan.

- **Don'ts**: No shorts, sleeveless/mini attire. Photography often not allowed inside sanctum. Non-Hindus can visit the complex but sanctum access may be restricted. Avoid littering or disturbing rituals.

Nearby Temples

Kanchipuram is the "City of Thousand Temples." Key ones:
- Ekambareswarar Temple (largest Shiva temple).
- Kamakshi Amman Temple.
- Varadharaja Perumal Temple (Vishnu).
- Kachapeshwarar Temple.

Nearby Hotels

Many options in Kanchipuram town (e.g., near bus stand or other temples). Check platforms like MakeMyTrip or local ones for current availability. Budget and mid-range hotels are common.

Nearby Tourist Spots

- Other Kanchipuram temples.
- Mahabalipuram (Mamallapuram) beach and monuments (~60 km).
- Silk weaving centers (famous Kanchipuram sarees).
- Chennai for urban attractions.

Any Other Info

- The temple's circumambulatory passage has symbolic significance (crawling through narrow passages representing life's journey and moksha).

- Best visited in Oct-March for pleasant weather.

- It is a serene, less crowded temple compared to others in Kanchi, ideal for history and architecture enthusiasts.

- Always verify the latest timings, pooja schedules, and charges directly, as they can vary.

For the most current details, contact the temple administration or visit official tourism sites.

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Ref: ClaudeAI

KAILASANATHAR TEMPLE, KANCHIPURAM

Here is a comprehensive guide to the **Kailasanathar Temple, Kanchipuram:**

📍 LOCATION

The Kailasanathar Temple is located on the banks of the Vegavathi River at the western limits of Kanchipuram city, facing east. It lies in the "Shiva Kanchi" zone — one of the three Kanchis in Kancheepuram, the other two being Vishnu Kanchi and Jain Kanchi. [IndiaOnline](https://www.kancheepuramonline.in/guide/kailasanathar-temple)

Address: Kailasanathar Temple Road, Pillaiyarpalayam, Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu – 631501
Coordinates: 12°50′32.3″N, 79°41′22.8″E
Phone: 044-2744-2232g

🚗 HOW TO GET THERE

The temple is located about 5 km from the Kanchipuram Bus Stand, from where frequent bus services are available to major cities such as Bangalore, Chennai, Tirupati, and Vellore. Kanchipuram is approximately 75 km from Chennai.

[Tamilnadutourisminfo](https://tamilnadutourisminfo.com/kailasanathar-temple-kancheepuram/)

By Air: The nearest airport is Chennai International Airport, about 75 km away.

[Tripoto](https://www.tripoto.com/kanchipuram/places-to-visit/kailasanatha-temple)

By Rail: For rail travelers, Kanchipuram Railway Station (3 km away) and Arakkonam Railway Station (29 km away) are the closest stations.

[Tamilnadutourisminfo](https://tamilnadutourisminfo.com/kailasanathar-temple-kancheepura
Tm/)

From the station, autos and taxis are readily available.

By Road: Frequent buses run from Chennai's Koyambedu CMBT and Tambaram bus stands to Kanchipuram. From the bus stand, autos/cabs take you to the temple in about 10–15 minutes. The temple is well-connected by NH 48 (Chennai–Bengaluru highway).

Local Transport: Auto-rickshaws, cycle rickshaws, and taxis are easily available within the city.

⭐ SPECIALITY OF THIS TEMPLE

One of the most ancient temples of South India, the Kailasanathar Temple was built by Pallava King Rajasimha about 1,300 years ago and stands as a testimony to the architectural excellence of a bygone dynasty.
[Tamil NaduTourism]
(https://www.tamilnadutourism.com/attractions/temples/kailasanathar-temple.php)

The temple rises gracefully on the banks of the Vegavathi River and is often referred to as the "Sand Temple" because artisans used sandstone extensively in its construction.

[Tamilnadutourisminfo]
(https://tamilnadutourisminfo.com/kailasanathar-temple-kancheepuram/)

The temple is often visited by unmarried men and women seeking a partner — women tie a wedding knot directly to the Mother Goddess, while men do the same to the Nandi statue in front of Lord Shiva. Circumambulation here is slightly different: devotees have to crawl a few steps through a narrow passage, symbolising the passage of life, and exit through another passage symbolising rebirth.

[Indianpanorama](https://www.indianpanorama.in/temples/kailasanathar-temple-kanchipura
m.php)

This temple was the first of its kind to use stone architecture, as compared to other structures which were rock-cut carvings.

[IndiaOnline](https://www.kancheepuramonline.in/guide/kailasanathar-temple)

📜 HISTORY AND LEGENDS

The Kailasanathar Temple was built by the Pallavas during 650–705 AD. It is the first structural temple in South India, started by Rajasimha Pallaveswaram and later completed by his son Mahendra Varma Pallava. The Pallavas were so enamoured of this city that they made Kancheepuram their capital. Later, the Cholas took over Kancheepuram after the Pallavas. [IndiaOnline](https://www.kancheepuramonline.in/guide/kailasanathar-temple)

The temple served as a haven during times of war. There was a tunnel built by the kings as an escape route which can be seen even today.

O[Indianpanorama](https://www.indianpanorama.in/temples/kailasanathar-temple-kanchipuram.php)

The Kailasanathar Temple (meaning "Lord of the Cosmic Mountain") is built in the tradition of Smartha worship — venerating Shiva, Vishnu, Devi, Surya, Ganapati, and Kartikeya — a practice which replaced Buddhism in the region.
[Temple Purohit](https://www.templepurohit.com/hindu-temple/kanchi-kailasanathar-temple/)

Historians acclaim that the Kanchi Kailasanathar Temple has been the trendsetter of temple architecture in South India for its unique architecture, huge facades, grand towers, and unusual style of sculptures and figurines. [Tamil NaduTourism].

(https://www.tamilnadutourism.com/attractions/temples/kailasanathar-temple.php)

🏛️ ARCHITECTURE

The temple is built on a rectangular plinth measuring about 78 × 72 metres, surrounded by a high compound wall with a towered gateway (gopuram) on each side. The main entrance is on the east, facing the rising sun, and leads to a spacious courtyard. The main shrine is a pyramidal structure rising to a height of about 16 metres, supported by 64 pillars each carved with intricate motifs.

[Tripoto](https://www.tripoto.com/kanchipuram/places-to-visit/kailasanatha-temple)

The foundation of the temple is laid on granite stones while the superstructure is carved out of sandstone.

[Kancheepuram District](https://kancheepuram.nic.in/tourism/places-of-interest/)

The circumambulatory passage (pradakshina patha) forms a narrow, enclosed corridor encircling the sanctum sanctorum, enabling devotees to perform clockwise circumambulation. The inner walls of this passage are adorned with 58 small shrines (devakulikas), each featuring miniature octagonal vimanas and housing sculptures of various deities. [Grokipedia]

(https://grokipedia.com/page/Kailasanathar_Temple,_Kanchipuram)

The pillars of the mandapa have the repetitive feature of mythical lion mounts (yalis), a characteristic element of Pallava-style architecture. There are 16 Shiva lingas in black granite stone on the outside compound wall.

[Tripoto](https://www.tripoto.com/kanchipuram/places-to-visit/kailasanatha-temple)

The temple is also important for one of the earliest and finest specimens of mural art in Tamil Nadu, found on the inner walls. The carvings largely relate to Shaivism yet also include significant themes from Vaishnavism, Shaktism, and Vedic deities.

[wanderlog](https://wanderlog.com/place/details/5615/kailasanatha-de-kanchipuram)

🙏 **MAIN DEITY AND SUB-DEITIES**

****Main Deity**:** Lord Kailasanathar (Shiva). The Shiva lingam in the sanctum is 10 feet high. [Kancheepuram District](https://kancheepuram.nic.in/tourism/places-of-interest/)

****Sub-Deities**:**

The temple has 58 small shrines built into the niches of the compound wall enclosing the main shrine, depicting carvings of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati in many dance forms.

[IndiaOnline](https://www.kancheepuramonline.in/guide/kailasanathar-temple)

The 58 shrines house sculptures of various forms of Shiva — including Lingodbhavamurti and Uma-Maheshwara — along with representations of Vishnu, Shakti, and attendant figures like Ganesha and Kartikeya.

[Grokipedia](https://grokipedia.com/page/Kailasanathar_Temple,_Kanchipuram)

Surrounding the main shrine are nine smaller shrines celebrating different forms of Shiva — seven outside and two inside flanking the entrance of the sanctum.

[GRT Hotels](https://www.grthotels.com/blogs/temples-in-kanchipuram.html)

A large kneeling Nandi faces the main shrine at the entrance.

🪔 **DAILY RITUALS AND POOJAS**

The temple is open from 6:30 AM to 12:30 PM and from 4:00 PM to 7:30 PM. [Kancheepuram District](https://kancheepuram.nic.in/tourism/places-of-interest/)

(Some sources note timings as 6:00 AM–12:00 PM and 4:00 PM–7:00 PM — it is advisable to confirm locally.)

Puja is offered daily twice — once in the morning and once in the evening.

[IndiaOnline](https://www.kancheepuramonline.in/guide/kailasanathar-temple)

The aarti (ritual waving of lamps) is a sight to behold during the evening session. [Tripoto](https://www.tripoto.com/kanchipuram/places-to-visit/kailasanatha-temple)

Important Note:** Since this temple is under the **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)**, it functions more as a protected monument than a fully active agamic temple. Elaborate daily pooja schedules and specific pooja charges as seen in HR&CE-managed temples may not apply here. Photography inside the sanctum is generally not permitted. It is best to contact the temple directly for current pooja details and charges.

🌟 SPECIAL POOJAS

On full moon days, special pujas are conducted for the Lord and Mother Goddess. [Indianpanorama](https://www.indianpanorama.in/temples/kailasanathar-temple-kanchipuram.php) Monthly Pradosham observances are also conducted with special rituals.

For specific special pooja charges, devotees should inquire at the temple office, as these vary and may be updated periodically.

🎉 FESTIVALS CELEBRATED

Thirukarthigai (November–December), when approximately one lakh lamps are lit in the temple premises, and Maha Shivaratri (February–March) are the festivals grandly celebrated at the Kanchi Kailasanathar Temple. Monthly Pradosham and full moon days are also observed with poojas and rituals.
[Tamil Nadu Tourism]
(https://www.tamilnadutourism.com/attractions/temples/kailasanathar-temple.php)

Maha Shivaratri, celebrated on the 13th night/14th day of the Hindu month of Magha (February/March), is the most significant festival, when thousands of devotees flock to the temple.

[Incredible India](https://www.incredibleindia.gov.in/en/tamil-nadu/kanchipuram/kailasanatha-temple)

The temple is also a hub of activity **during Navaratri and Panguni Uthiram**, when it is adorned with lights and flowers and special rituals and cultural programs are conducted.

[Templeshub](https://templeshub.co.in/portfolio/kailasanathar/)

Brahmotsavam is also observed annually with great devotion.

🏠 FACILITIES FOR DEVOTEES

Since the temple is maintained by **ASI**, on-site accommodation is not provided within the temple complex itself. However:
- Drinking water facilities are available within the complex.

- A serene pond and lawn are located within the temple premises. Nearby shops are available for convenience, and parking facilities are accessible for all types of vehicles. CCTV surveillance ensures security.

[wanderlog](https://wanderlog.com/place/details/5615/kailasanatha-de-kanchipuram)

- Footwear stands are available at the entrance.
- Guide services are available for tourists who wish to understand the history and sculptures in depth.

✅ DO'S AND DON'TS

Do's:**

- Costumes such as pant-shirt, dhoti-shirt, pyjama-kurtha, sarees, and salwars — covering the upper arms and legs — are suggested as a mark of respect to temple customs. [Tamil Nadu
Tourism](https://www.tamilnadutourism.com/attractions/temples/kailasanathar-temple.php)
- Remove footwear before entering.
- Perform the pradakshina (circumambulation) as it has special spiritual significance, including the crawling passage.
- Maintain silence and decorum inside.
- Arrive during open hours and plan extra time to admire the sculptures.

Don'ts:**

- Photography inside the temple is not allowed.

[Temple Purohit](https://www.templepurohit.com/hindu-temple/kanchi-kailasanathar-temple/)
- Do not touch or climb on the ancient sculptures and carvings.
- Avoid loud conversation or using mobile phones inside the sanctum.
- Do not carry non-vegetarian food or alcohol into the temple premises.
- Do not litter within the temple complex.

🏛️ NEARBY TEMPLES

Kanchipuram is the "City of a Thousand Temples." Key temples near Kailasanathar include:

The Ekambaranatha Temple, Kachapeshwarar Temple, and Kamakshi Amman Temple

[Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kailasanathar_Temple,_Kanchipuram) are among the most notable. **Other prominent nearby temples include:**

- **Varadaraja Perumal Temple** — one of the 108 Divya Desams
- **Vaikunta Perumal Temple** — another fine Pallava-era monument

- **Ulagalanda Perumal Temple**
- **Kumara Kottam Temple** (dedicated to Lord Murugan)
- **Tiruttanka Adi Varaha Perumal Temple**
- **Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham Math** — the sacred mutt of Adi Shankaracharya

🏨 NEARBY HOTELS

For pilgrims and temple visitors, recommended stays include Regency GRT, Saraswathi Lodge, and Heritage Inn near the Kailasanathar Temple area.

[Tusk Travel](https://www.tusktravel.com/blog/hotels-resorts-kanchipuram/)

Other options:

- **Royal Stay Kanchipuram** (~0.5 km from the temple) — budget-friendly with restaurant and free Wi-Fi
- **Hotel Ramco Residency** (~1.5 km) — convenient access to major temples
- **Sri Hari Residency** (~1.3 km) — comfortable rooms with basic amenities
- **The Paradise Kingdom** (~1.6 km) — well-rated
- **GRT Regency** — No. 487, Gandhi Road, Kanchipuram (Tel: 9940184251); **Tamil Nadu Hotel** — Railway Station Road (Tel: 044-27222553)

[IndiaOnline](https://www.kancheepuramonline.in/guide/kailasanathar-temple)

- **Regency Kanchipuram by GRT Hotels** — about 4 km from the temple, a premium option

🌿 NEARBY TOURIST SPOTS

- **Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary** — a famous migratory bird sanctuary (~50 km)
- **Kanchi Kudil** — a heritage house museum showcasing traditional Tamil Brahmin life
- **Mukteswarar Temple** — another ancient Pallava structure
- **Vallam Cave Temple**
- **Muttukadu Backwaters** — a scenic spot near ECR (~50 km)
- Kanchipuram is world-famous for its silk weaving, and the city's silk markets are a must-visit; many temple motifs from Kailasanathar are woven into traditional Kanchipuram sarees. [UNESCO

](https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/6528/)

ℹ️ OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

- **Entry Fee**:** Free (no entry charges as it is an ASI-protected monument)
- **Best Time to Visit**:** October to March (pleasant weather); or during Maha Shivaratri and Thirukarthigai for a festive experience

- **ASI Maintenance**:** The temple is currently well maintained by the Archaeological Survey of India.

[Kancheepuram District](https://kancheepuram.nic.in/tourism/places-of-interest/)

- **Language**:** Tamil, Hindi, and English are understood at the temple
- The temple is equally significant for **history enthusiasts, architecture lovers, and spiritual seekers**
- There is **no dress code strictly enforced but modest attire is strongly recommended**
- **The unique **crawl-through tunnel** in the pradakshina path** is a memorable experience and should not be skipped

This temple is truly one of the crown jewels of South Indian heritage — a 1,300-year-old living monument that rewards every visitor with awe-inspiring art, deep spiritual energy, and a window into the genius of the Pallava dynasty.

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Ref: Wikipedia

Kailasanathar Temple, Kanchipuram

The **Kailasanathar Temple, Kanchipuram**, also referred to as the **Kailasanatha temple**, is a Pallava-era historic Hindu temple in Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu, India. Dedicated to Shiva, it is one of the oldest surviving monuments in Kanchipuram.[1] It reflects a Dravidian architecture and was built around 700 CE by Narasimhavarman II with additions by Mahendravarman III.[2] A square-plan temple, it has a *mukha-mandapa* (entrance hall), a *maha-mandapa* (gathering hall) and a primary *garbha-griya* (sanctum) topped with a four-storey *vimana*. The main sanctum is surrounded by nine shrines, seven outside and two inside flanking the entrance of the sanctum, all with forms of Shiva. The outer walls of the temple's *prakara* (courtyard) is also surrounded by cells.[2]

The Kailasanathar temple is notable for its intricately carved galaxy of Hindu art in the late 7th- and early 8th-century Tamil tradition. These largely relate to Shaivism, yet also include significant number of themes from Vaishnavism, Shaktism and Vedic deities.[3] The temple is also notable for one of the early and best specimens of Hindu mural art in Tamil Nadu. This is found in the inner walls of the courtyard cells. The murals are in a style that is also found in the Ajanta Caves, as well as in the historic paintings in the 8th-century Vaikunthaperumal temple, also in Kanchipuram.[4] The temple walls have many inscriptions in early scripts, important to the epigraphical study of regional history and Tamil temple traditions.[5]

The structure contains 58 small shrines which are dedicated to various forms of Shiva. These are built into niches on the inner face of the high compound wall of the circumambulatory passage.[6][7] The temple is one of the most prominent tourist attractions of the city.[8]

Geography

The temple is located towards the west of Kanchipuram city, and is about 75 kilometres (47 mi) from Chennai.[9] Its location, demarcated according to the religious faiths, is in one of two "Kanchis", the Shiva Kanchi; and the Vishnu Kanchi. The Kailasanathar Temple is one of several notable temples in Kanchipuram, the others being Ekambaranatha, Kachapeshwarar, Kamakshi Amman, Kumarakottam Temple, and Varadaraja Perumal.[*citation needed*]

History

The Kailasanathar Temple (meaning: "Lord of Kailasa"), is built in the tradition of Smartha worship of Shiva, Vishnu, Devi, Surya (Sun), Ganesha and Kartikeya, in Hinduism.[*citation needed*]

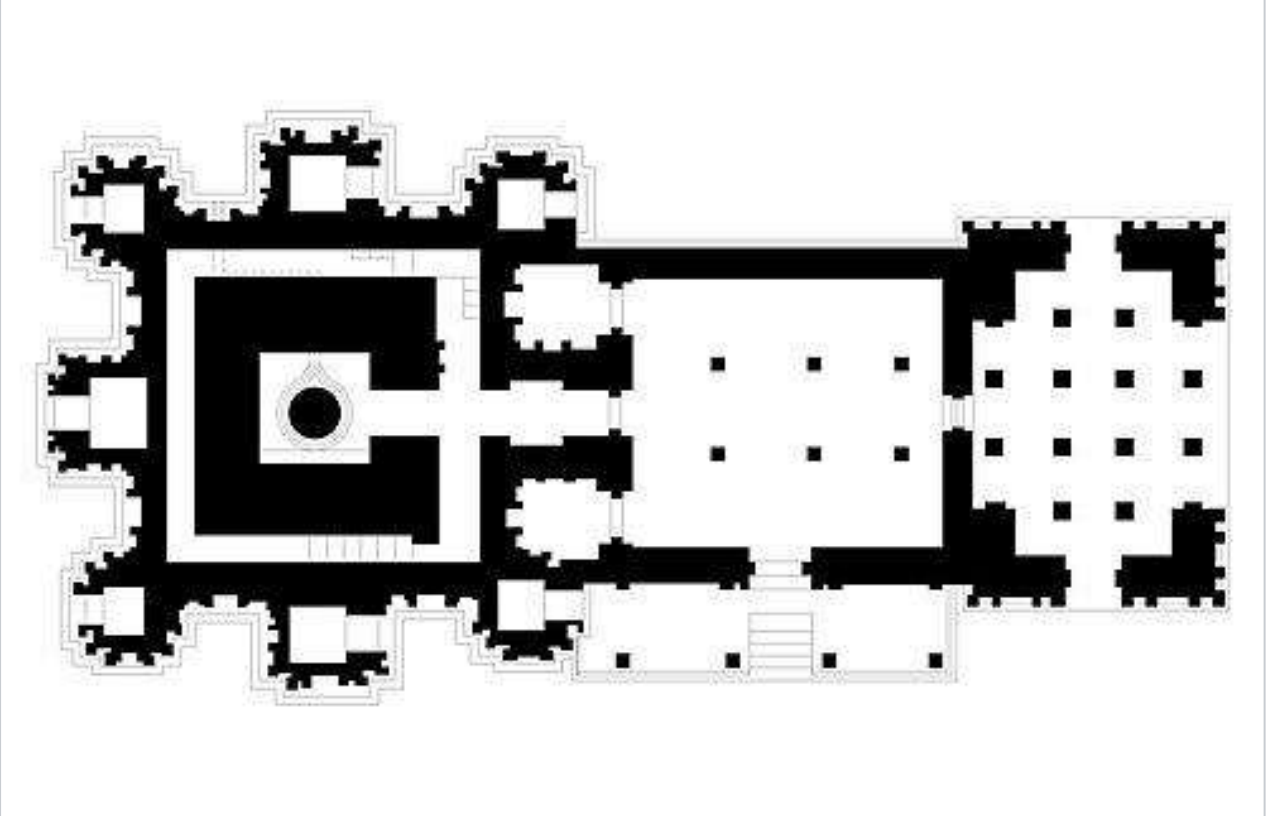
Temple construction is credited to the Pallava dynasty, who had established their kingdom with Kanchipuram (also known as "Kanchi" or "Shiva Vishnu Kanchi") as the capital city, considered one of the seven sacred cities under Hinduism. In Kanchi, after the Pallavas expanded their territories to the north, west and south both within Tamil, Andhra and Kannada territories under Emperor Narasimhavarman I, they started expanding their capital city of Kanchipuram and built many temples of great magnificence. Among the two unique specimens of temple architecture of the period 640–730 CE are the Tiru Parameswara Vinnagaram, which is also known as the Vaikunta Perumal temple and the Kailasanathar Temple.[10]

Outer view of the temple

The temple was built around 700 CE with additions in the 8th century and restorations in later centuries. It is the first structural temple built in South India by Narasimhavarman II (Rajasimha), also known as Rajasimha Pallaveswaram.[11] His son, Mahendravarman III, completed the front façade and the gopuram (tower). Prior temples were either built of wood or hewn into rock faces in caves or on boulders, as seen in Mahabalipuram.[6] The Kailasanathar temple became the trend setter for other similar temples in South India.[*citation needed*] According to local belief, the temple was a safe sanctuary for the rulers of the kingdom during wars. A secret tunnel, built by the kings, was used as an escape route and is still visible.[6] It is believed that Raja Raja Chola I (985–1014 CE) visited the temple and drew inspiration from this temple to build the Brihadeeswara Temple.[12]

Currently, Kanchi Kailasanathar Temple is maintained by Archaeological Survey of India.[13]

Architecture



The floor plan of the Kailasanathar temple

Inner court, or the circumambulatory passage, with 58 subshrines.

Typical pillar design with multi-directional mythical lions.

View of the temple

The temple has retained the Pallava architecture in its original stylized form with influence of the later styles developed by the Chola Dynasty and Vijayanagara Emperors.[6] It is of stone built architecture unlike the rock cut architecture built into hallowed caves or carved into rock outcrops as in Mahabalipuram. The tall gopuram (tower) is to the left and the temple

complex is to the right.[citation needed] The temple's foundations are made of granite, which could withstand the weight of the temple, while the superstructure, including the carvings, are all made of sandstone. Initially, only the main sanctuary existed with pyramidal *vimana* and a detached mandapa (main hall).[citation needed][14]

The temple complex is complete in all respects as it has *garbagriha* (sanctum sanctorum), antarala (inner enclosure), mandapa, a high compound wall, and an entrance gate, the gopuram.[13] The mandapa, which was initially detached, was made part of the main shrine by interposing an *ardhamantapa* (smaller hall). The pillars of the mandapa have the repetitive features of mythical lion mounts.[citation needed]

The structure has a simple layout with a tower or vimana at the center of the complex. The vimana of the temple, above the main shrine (sanctum sanctorum), is square in plan and rises up in a pyramidal shape. The tower has many levels rising proportionately.[citation needed]At the top of this tower, there is a small roof in the shape of a dome. The pillar elements with mythical animal shapes (lions on the base) are extra features in Pallava style.[13][10] At the entrance, the *gopuram* walls are plastered. Its entrance wall has eight small shrines and a gopura, precursor to the main gopura. At some later stage, the mandapa and the sanctuary were joined by an intermediate hall called the *ardhamantapa*, which is reported to have marred the beauty of the temple to some extent. The temple is enclosed within walls in a rectangular layout.

The main shrine has a 16 sided Shivalinga in black granite stone deified in the sanctum sanctorum. Within the walls of the main shrine there is *padabhanda adhisthana* (main pedestal) with very elegantly carved images of gods with a sculpted Nandi, a little distance away giving guard to the deity. On each face of the outer walls of the main shrine there are many carvings of deities.

In the south facing wall the sculpture depicts Shiva as *Umamaheshavara* (Shiva with his consort Parvati) with Lingodbhava (emergence of Shiva as fiery pillar - linga) surrounded by Brahma and Vishnu and flying amaras on the lower level.

The west facing hall has sculptures of Shiva in the form of *Sandhya Tandavamurti* and *Urdhava Tandvamurti* and the ensemble is completed with images of *ganas* in dancing poses and also with images of Brahma, Vishnu, Nandi and Parvati.

The carving of Shiva on the north facing wall is a composition of *Tripurantaka* flanked by three *ganas*, goddess Durga with three *ganas*, and goddesses Bhairavi, Kaushiki and Jyestha.

The exterior faces of the *vimana* (tower) have images of aspects of Shiva - Bhikshatana, Somaskanda and in *Samhara-Tandava* (destructive dancing) pose.

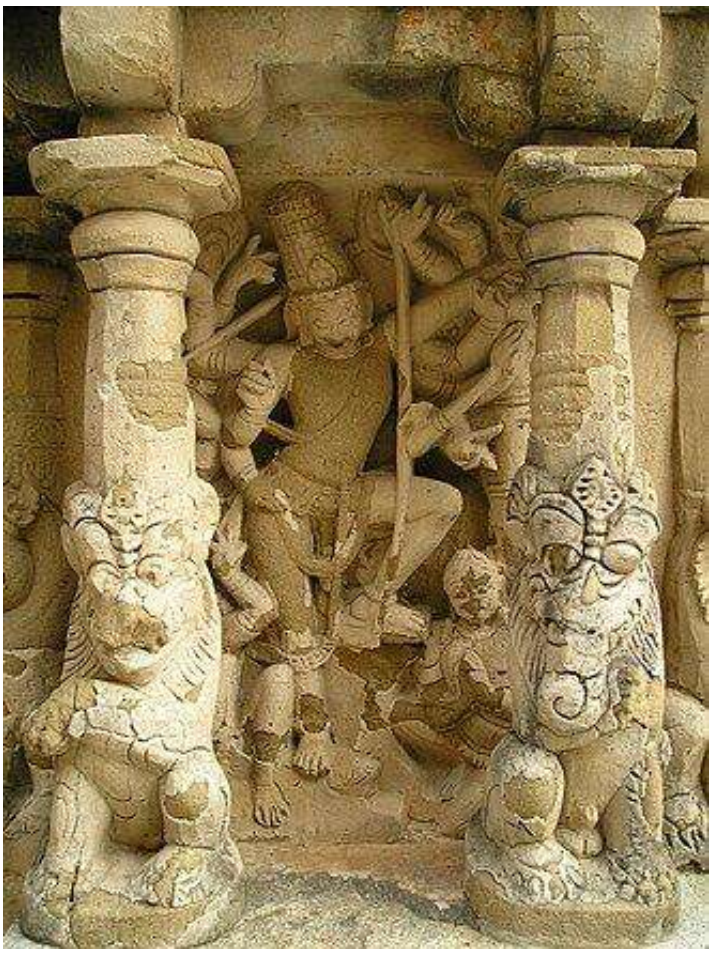
Central shrine

In the inner walls of the prakara (circumambulatory passage) there is galaxy of images of Durga, Kartikeya, Bhavati, Tripurantaka, Garudarudha-Vishnu, Asura Samhara (slaying of demons), Narasimha (Vishnu's avatar), Trivikrama (another Vishnu's avatar), Shiva Tandava (Shiva in a dancing pose), Shiva severing the fifth head of Brahma, desecration of Yagna of Daksha, Brahma and his wife, Gangadhara, *Urdhava tandava,* Vishnu flanked by Bhudevi and Sridevi, Lingodbhava, Bhikshatana, Ravana, and Vali offering prayers to *Atmalinga Chandikeshvara.* The image of Ardhanariswara sitting on a bull is considered the most noteworthy among all images.[15]

Vimana's south facing wall has very elegant image of Shiva in a sitting posture of peace and quietude known as Dakshinamurthy, and its west wall has Shiva in the form of Lingodbhava.[*citation needed*]

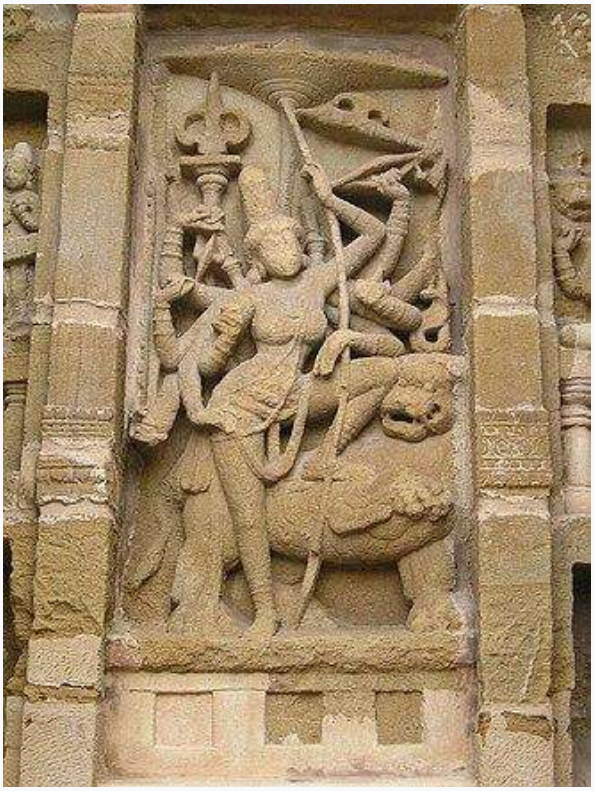
The tower has multiple shrines embodied on all its external faces which have the appearance of miniature shrines. These shrines have three features, the sala (rectangular), kuta (square) and panjara (apsidal) styles. Eight small shrines also decorate the entrance wall. The 58 small shrines are built into the niches of the compound wall that encloses the main shrine;[*citation needed*] they depict Somaskanada reliefs of Shiva and his consort Parvathi in many dance forms.[6]

The temple maybe built using a geopolymer that looks like sandstone.[16]



A sculpture in one of the niches of the 58 subshrines

Sculpture depicting Shiva as Gangadhara capturing the river Ganges with a strand of his hair



Sculpture depicting Goddess Durga

Other features

A small figure playing the alapini vina in a niche

Kinnara playing a yazh, c. 8th century CE

The outstanding feature of sculptures is the profusion of depiction of the erect lions projecting out in several directions.[citation needed]There are two sculptures of Shiva here which are seen holding the alapini veena (musical string instrument) in the hand. There is a lot of difference between the veenas found in the said sculptures and the present day veena.[17] There are also beautiful sculptures of *Mathahvialasa Prakshanam.* The temple also has the earliest stone inscription which records of the twenty eight *Saivagamas* (Shaiva saints) in which the Pallava King Rajasimhavarman states his faith in Shaivism.[18] The murals on the inner walls[citation needed] are well preserved.[citation needed]

Circumambulatory passage

A circumambulatory passage, with a symbolic meaning, is situated along the compound wall. In order to make the circumambulation, there is a narrow entry passage which devotees must crawl through. Seven steps must be climbed in order to reach the passage. Passing through the narrow passage is indicative of passage through life. After circumambulation, the exit is through a pit or another narrow passage symbolic of death.[citation needed] The entry point for this passage is called the Gate of Death (Tamil: இறப்பு வாசல்). It is believed that making the circumambulation round the various deities would usher the same blessings as visiting paradise. When one completes circumambulation, crawling and coming out of the passage indicates coming out of their mother's womb and also explains Hindus' belief of rebirth. Hence, the exit is called the Gate of Birth (Tamil: பிறப்பு வாசல்). There is another belief that by completing this circumambulatory passage, the cycle of rebirth is broken and one attains Moksha. The passage explains the life cycle including aging process, death and rebirth. Maha Shivaratri is the biggest festival held in the temple when thousand of devotees throng the temple in the evening hours to offer prayers to the main deity.[6]

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Videos

Kailasanathar Temple, Kanchipuram (16 min):

https://youtu.be/QUwjnIB6FDg?si=iCD5ByaBFe8CegnW

Kailasanathar Temple, Kanchipuram (6 min):

https://youtu.be/6Ovy89L0r58?si=2thOxNEdPWp_Pi4M

Kailasanathar Temple, Kanchipuram …FaceBook (0.3 min):

https://www.facebook.com/share/v/18WMBn4TCq/

Kailasanathar Temple, Kanchipuram (0.27 min):

https://youtube.com/shorts/wQDZBnmkDE8?si=enrkY9m21Ix8-th8

Kailasanathar Temple. Kanchipuram…FaceBook (0.4 min):

https://www.facebook.com/share/r/1CzLs3qRiL/

Kailasanathar Temple, Kanchipuram (2 min):

https://youtu.be/61Hvx9OoW9U?si=kLH90TY0A6IIFnVg

Kailasanathar Temple, Kanchipuram…FaceBook (0.27 min):

https://www.facebook.com/share/v/194svAZyui/

Kailasanathar Temple, Kanchipuram (4 min):

https://youtu.be/aC03bfVv0x8?si=1Ajw-IUPSfl7rNqI

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Note: At the end of this ebook, two pages are included, giving (I) Author info, and (ii) a master link and QR code to download all my Technical (viz. Thermodynamics, Heat Transfer, and Cryogenic Engineering) ebooks plus Spiritual ebooks, stored in archive.org.

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About the Author

Dr. M. Thirumaleshwar is a Mechanical Engineer with specialization in Cryogenics. He obtained his B. E. In Mechanical Engineering from Karnataka Regional Engg College, (Now NITK), Surathkal, India and M.Sc. in Cryogenics from the University of Southampton, U.K., and Ph.D. from the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore.

He has worked in prestigious organizations such as BARC, Bombay and Centre for Advanced Technology (CAT), Indore,as Head of Cryogenics Dept and contributed to the design of cryogenic systems, including the Thermovac chamber for ISRO, Bangalore.

He was also a visiting fellow at Superconducting Super Collider Project, at Texas, USA.

He has also served as Professor, Head of Department, and Principal in reputed engineering institutions.

Dr. Thirumaleshwar has authored a large number of FREE ebooks on Engineering subjects such as Thermodynamics, Heat Transfer, and Cryogenic Engineering, which are useful for students and teachers.

Driven by a deep interest in India's spiritual heritage, he has also authored many FREE ebooks on Temples, Saints, Gurus, and Vedic topics, with the aim of preserving and spreading this knowledge to future generations.

All his ebooks are available for free download at Archive.org.

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Dr. M. Thirumaleshwar
May 22, 2026

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